

April 1, 2024

Via email to:

State Senator Andrew Gounardes
State Senator Brian Kavanagh
State Senator Jamaal Bailey
State Senator Cordell Cleare
State Senator Leroy Comrie
State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal
State Senator Robert Jackson
State Senator Zellnor Myrie
State Senator Kevin Parker
State Senator Jessica Ramos
State Senator Julia Salazar
State Senator Luis Sepulveda
State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky
Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal
Assemblymember Tony Simone
Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes
Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest
Assemblymember Emily Gallagher
Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon
Assemblymember Alan Hevesi
Assemblymember Alex Bores
Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas
Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn
Assemblymember Zohran Mamdani
Assemblymember Grace Lee
Assemblymember Maritza Davila
Assemblymember Catalina Cruz
Assemblymember John Zaccaro, Jr.
Assemblymember Eddie Gibbs
Assemblymember Chantel Jackson
Assemblymember David Weprin
Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar
Assemblymember Al Taylor
Assemblymember Monique Chandler-Waterman

Re: Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act S.7791/A.8386

Dear State Senators and Assemblymembers,

We write to express our strong concerns about certain provisions of the [Faith-Based Affordable Housing Act](#), of which you are a sponsor, as currently written.

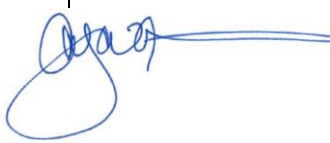
The existing language of the bill would seem to supersede that authority of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission and allow for construction, alteration, and demolition on designated properties without the Commission's review and approval, so long as it conforms to the bill's provisions. This is extremely concerning, and would be the first time any state legislation has taken such a step.

We have raised this concern with the prime sponsor of the bill, State Senator Andrew Gounardes. In response to inquiries from Andrew Berman of Village Preservation, State Senator Gounardes' Senior Policy and Legislative Director Becky White indicated that this was not the intention of the bill, and that she would be making amendments to the bill language to make that clear and remove that possibility (see attached).

We are heartened by and appreciate that response. However, until such amendments take place, the bill does exist in its current form, and a vigorous campaign is being waged to secure its passage. We are concerned that the bill could be advanced or voted upon in its current form, to terrible effect.

Therefore we urge that no action be taken upon the bill until and unless such amendments as those described by Ms. White are made. We would appreciate being provided with an updated version of the bill language as soon as possible, and barring the availability of such a document, a written commitment from you that you will not support such a bill until and unless such changes are made.

Sincerely,



[Elizabeth Goldstein](#)

President

[Municipal Art Society](#)



[Peg Breen](#)

President

[NY Landmarks
Conservancy](#)

[Andrew Berman](#)

Executive Director

[Village Preservation](#)



[Nuha Ansari](#)

Executive Director

[Friends of the Upper
Historic Districts](#)



[Sean Khorsandi](#)

Executive Director

[Landmark West!](#)

From: Becky White becky@senatorgounardes.nyc
Subject: Re: Faith-based Affordable Housing Act
Date: Mar 27, 2024 at 6:30:52 PM
To: Andrew Berman andrew@gvshp.org

Hi Andrew, I think the issue with the language in S7791 currently is that we specify that no provision of the bill would "require the alteration of demolition of buildings designated as historical sites of landmarks" when it really should plainly say that it does not supersede various historic preservation statutes and NYC Landmarks Law. so any property owner wishing to restore, alter, demolish, or reconstruct a designated property in NYC, for example, would still need to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness through the NYC Landmarks Preservation [Commission](#); that process would in no way be impacted by the as-of-right development created in S7791. I am making a series of other amendments soon so I can clarify the relationship between our bill and these existing statutes when I do so.

Hope this answers the question and please don't hesitate to reach out if anything else comes up.

Many thanks,

Becky White
Senior Policy and Legislative Director
State Senator Andrew Gounardes
[497 Carroll St, Suite 31](#)
[Brooklyn, NY 11215](#)
Brooklyn: [718-238-6044](#)
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For all meeting requests & event invitations, please visit: www.senatorgounardes.nyc/schedulerequest/